

**Department of Transportation  
Public Informational and Scoping Meeting  
Project No. 102-269  
Reconstruction of the Routes 7 and 15 Interchange and Route 15 and Main  
Avenue Interchange  
Norwalk**

**February 25, 2009 7:00 PM  
Norwalk City Hall**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

ConnDOT:

Thomas Harley  
Richard Armstrong  
Andy Fesenmeyer  
Stephen Degen

Purcell Associates:

Jeffrey Koerner  
Michael Fisher  
Steve Ulman

LADA:

Terri-Ann Hahn  
Chris Korbel

**Presentation:**

Prior to the start of the presentation at 7:00 p.m., photo renderings and plans were available for viewing in the lobby of the City Hall beginning at 6:30 p.m. A handout was provided to the meeting attendees, which included a plan and list of advantages of the new preferred alternate, Alternate 21C. Also, in the handout was a comparison of three current alternates as they relate to the top 20 surveyed issues and concerns as identified by the stakeholder committee.

- Mr. Richard Armstrong opened the meeting and made a powerpoint presentation which included the following topics:
- **Background**
- **Stakeholders' Involvement** (Mr. Armstrong expressed the Department of Transportation's appreciation for those on the stakeholder committee)
- **Alternate 21C**
- **Renderings**
- **Next Steps**
- **Comments/Questions**

Ms. Terry Hahn then presented 14 photo renderings depicting proposed conditions of Alternate 21C and comparing them to the existing conditions.

After the presentation, Mr. Armstrong read a letter to the audience from State Senator Bob Duff. Senator Duff regretted not being able to attend the meeting due to the fact senate was in session in Hartford.

### **Public Comments and Questions:**

- Ms. Linda Hoza, a member of the stakeholder's group, spoke favorably of the project and thanked all involved for their time and effort.
- A concern was raised regarding increased speeds on Main Ave. resulting from the project and its affect on pedestrian safety. The concerned resident suggested raised cross walks, a pedestrian island, and speed tables as possibilities to improve the safety of pedestrians. Mr. Armstrong stated that speed is always a concern in any design, however speed tables would not be appropriate in this location. Mr. Steve Ulman then stated that pedestrians will have an exclusive pedestrian phase in the proposed signal design therefore eliminating the need for a pedestrian island.
- Ms. Joanne Horvath, a member of the stakeholder's group, spoke in support of the proposed design of Alternate 21C and thanked all involved.
- Mr. Richard McGregor, a resident of Lakewood Dr., stated that "this is a great plan" which addresses many concerns. Replacing the cable guiderail with the Merritt Parkway Rail will improve the safety of the roadway. He suggested that Route 7 be extended to Danbury. He also recommended that some type of noise abatement be considered in the area of Lakewood Drive. He further suggested that in the current economic climate, construction companies may be inclined to provide competitive pricing.
- Mr. David Olson of the Silvermine Community Association, and a member of the stakeholder committee, spoke in favor of Alternate 21C. He stated that the process of gathering information was very thorough and all questions were addressed. In regard to the design, all connections have been made, safety has been improved, neighborhood impacts have been minimized, wetland impacts have been reduced, the amount of tree cutting has been minimized, noise and pollution has been addressed.
- A concern was expressed regarding the discharge of salt and sand through a drainage system on Main Avenue directly into the Norwalk River. Mr. Armstrong stated that this issue will be addressed during the design phase of the project and will require certification by the CTDEP.

- Another concern regarding the potential for ponding under the Main Street Bridge was voiced. Mr. Jeff Koerner assured her that the proposed roadway elevations will be such that a properly designed drainage system will effectively remove stormwater from the roadway.
- A question was posed in reference to the proposed condition of the Perry Ave. bridge to the north of the Parkway. Mr. Armstrong stated that the current plan is to retrofit the bridge to blend architecturally with the proposed design.
- A Valley View Road resident expressed a concern for the final appearance of the Merritt Parkway which will result from construction of this project. Mr. Armstrong stated that the ConnDOT has committed to work with the Stakeholders throughout the design process to develop a comprehensive landscaping plan which will be appropriate for this corridor.
- A Stakeholder thanked the ConnDOT for their patience throughout the public process.
- A gentleman who works at the Merritt 7 office buildings spoke in favor of the project. He stated that traffic congestion on Main Ave and Grist Mill will be reduced while employees will benefit from a more efficient commute. He also mentioned that he liked that drivers would have the ability to go from Main Avenue directly to Route 7 SB and NB.
- A speaker from the National Trust for Historic Places spoke of the law suit that halted construction of the original project. He stated that this alternate understands the historic aspect of the Merritt Parkway. He then thanked all involved.
- Mr. Keith Simpson of the Merritt Parkway Conservancy commended Conn DOT and the stakeholder process. He thanked Mr. Harley and Mr. Armstrong for “leading the charge.” He finally stated that Alternate 21C is a “tremendous improvement.”
- Another Stakeholder spoke favorably of ConnDOT, the Stakeholder Process and the project in general.
- The resident at 76 Perry Ave raised his concerns of the potential impact the project will have on his and his neighbor’s residences. His opposition is a result of the proposed bridge on Perry Ave. and the ramp from Route 15 Northbound to Route 7 Southbound. Currently traffic noise can be heard from his home when the leaves are off the trees. He stated that this project is going to have a “great impact” on his house. Mr. Armstrong asked him to come forward after the meeting to discuss his concerns

further.

**Conclusion:**

Mr. Armstrong stated that the next step is to seek the funds necessary to begin the NEPA Environmental Document Phase as well as the Preliminary Design Phase.

Mr. Armstrong stated that ConnDOT will continue to work with the stakeholder group as the project further develops, especially with respect to the bike/pedestrian issues; the landscaping; aesthetic issues such as the architectural treatments on structures and walls; illumination; and any other issues of concern to the public.

At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Armstrong expressed ConnDOT's sincere appreciation for all those in attendance.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM